

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-20 are pending, with claim 1 being the sole independent claim.

Drawing objection

The Examiner has objected to the form of Figures 6 and 7. Applicants respectfully traverse this objection; however, to further prosecution Applicants have amended the figures as requested by the Examiner.

Claim rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-20 stand rejected being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,511,788 (Yasuda). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Yasuda has an effective prior art date of February 4, 2000. Submitted herewith is a verified translation of the priority application for the present case that was filed on December 21, 1999. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Yasuda is not available as prior art against the present application.

Applicants therefore submit that claims 1-20 are allowable over the cited reference.

In view of the above, favorable reconsideration in the form of a notice of allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300



Douglas F. Mueller
Reg. No. 30,300
DPM:DTL

Date: April 19, 2004